

BUILDING CULTURES OF PREPAREDNESS WITH TRIBES – AN OVERVIEW



Photo of (LEFT) Rick Zambrano, Logistics Manager for the NWTEMC-NTEMC, Robert DesRosier, Homeland Security Director and EM for the Blackfeet Indian Tribe, and Blackfeet Food Program staff

In 1999, Governor Gary Locke and Attorney General Christine Gregoire joined tribal chairs from throughout the state in signing an “Agreement to Institutionalize the Government-to-Government Relationship in Preparation for the New Millennium.” This agreement, between the State of Washington and the Tribal Nations, was an affirmation of the 1989 Centennial Accord. This event capped a three-day retreat titled “Building Bridges for the New Millennium.” During the Accord meeting, state and tribal officials framed the terms and principles of the state/tribal relationship needed to cement their government-to-government relationship. Among these principles were partnership and collaboration related to economic, social/cultural issues and natural resources, improved communication, cooperative education, and the development of a consensus-based, lasting, and respectful relationship.

There are a lot of obstacles in the way of progress in the state/tribal relationship. This agreement provided an action plan based on a foundation of historical understanding and common objectives. The discussion centered on these main areas: defining the state/tribal relationship, economic development, natural resource management, and social/cultural/education/law enforcement. A state/tribal workgroup was established and developed a process, structure, and protocols to implement the Centennial Accord and the New Millennium Agreement into a day-to-day working relationship.

Concerning economic development, one of many projects being undertaken according to the New Millennium Agreement is creating an updated report detailing the economic contributions of the tribes to the state, emphasizing making the report action-oriented.

Craig Bill, Executive Director of the Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs (GOIA), provided highlights from the 2020 Centennial Accord Agency. This annual report is mandated under our government-to-government relationship with Indian tribes (RCW 43.376). The report summarized work that state agencies

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completed to strengthen relations with tribal governments and enhance tribal communities. “While this report showcases valuable collaboration and commitment, we know the future holds opportunities for us to do even more. We are collectively experiencing unprecedented challenges during this pandemic. More than ever, that is why this tribal-state collaboration is pivotal to the health, safety, and protection of tribal communities – and the state – as a whole,” stated Craig.

EDUCATION:

There are many pathways through which Native students enter our state’s postsecondary education systems. For various reasons, Native student dropout rates vary by institution but are highest in two-year colleges. The research shows that students who first attend a community college are actually more likely to attain a bachelor’s degree than those beginning their freshman year in a four-year institution. Washington colleges and universities are working hard to create effective programs. Best practices for Native student success in consulting and engaging tribal communities; providing connections to family and culture; supporting positive Indian identity; finding Indian role models or mentors in the student body and the faculty and staff; providing comprehensive, integrated student support services; using culturally relevant curriculum and teaching; and tailoring programs to fit student schedules and other specific needs.

Washington colleges and universities—both large and small, private and public—lead the nation in creating learning communities that purposefully restructure the curriculum to promote curricular coherence, course integration, active learning, and a sense of community among students and instructors (Smith, MacGregor, et al. 2004). In addition to developing interventions around key transition points for students, many institutions are also working to create a more culturally relevant curriculum and restructure “gatekeeper courses” with high withdrawal and failure rates. Tutoring, mentoring, and supplemental instruction are also proven means of enhancing student success. Another overriding feature of successful programs for Native students is attention to cultural traditions and tribal values.



Photo of Blackfoot Food Program staff members

Many institutions create a physical sense of place for Native students by providing gathering places, such as a multicultural service center lounge, or creating visible symbols on campus. Examples include the Welcome Figure at one entry to the Evergreen campus, the Longhouse at Peninsula College, and the diversity clock tower at Centralia College. These structures provide an important sense of hospitality and recognition for students who typically feel a sense of invisibility or isolation in many institutional settings. Many colleges and universities are trying to work within the spirit of the Centennial Accord of 1989, which provided a framework and protocols for the state and each of 26 federally recognized tribes to respect their sovereignty.

Linda Crerar, Director of the HSEM Center of Excellence, talked with long time Center Advisory Board Member Lynda Zambrano and Director of the Northwest Tribal Emergency Management Council (NWTEMC) to help the Center reach out to our state’s Tribal communities to help focus our efforts to help lead our CTC colleges and our programs with racial, social, and economic justice in the service to our diverse communities. Our Advisory Board and staff are committed to creating practical ways to enhance diversity and inclusion into our all-hazard career pathways equity and encourage our six (6) career pathway programs to expand their commitment to reach a more diverse student population, broaden the curriculum to include topics such as systemic racism and implicit bias within these professions, and hire faculty that help to enlarge perspectives of the programs.

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We asked Lynda to talk with us about her work with the Tribal Emergency Management Council and the work that she and her Council Members have done working with both the Center and the Pierce College Homeland Security Emergency Management Degree Program in establishing the HSEM Tribal Certificate (put in the link to the Pierce HSEM Tribal Certificate) and how that curriculum and Certificate will be expanded and enhanced. We need to make sure our state's Tribal Communities know there is a pathway to establish a career as an Emergency Management Profession in our state.

Lynda talked about tribal resources and education. She mentioned a new report, "Building Cultures of Preparedness with Tribes," from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Tribal Emergency Management and Tribal Curriculum webpage. Lynda, along with several other members of the Tribal Colleges and Universities Emergency Management Education Focus Group, provided their comments and suggestions in the report.

Lynda was the lead author of the report and shared her thoughts about the project. She believes that it was "important to honor the great works of the tribal people that have come before us, accurately reflect the history of the Tribes and Tribal Emergency Management Higher Education journey to this point." Lynda is hoping that the report will give the reader a much deeper understanding of the challenges and obstacles and develop and deliver an EM curriculum into our state and country's higher education system. The report shares perspectives about past, present, and potential future tribal emergency management education pathways for tribal colleges, universities, and the communities they serve.

One of the Center's new Advisory Board members, Julie Jefferson, is a strong advocate for the need of tribal emergency management and preparedness curriculum.

In her role as the Communications Director for the Lummi Business Council, Julie is in a crucial position to ensure that members of her community receive the public information updates needed to keep them safe from covid-19 exposure. Her responsibilities as Communications Director for the Lummi Indian Business Council means that she is responsible for communications sent to the tribal council, the general council (enrolled tribal membership), the community, and the press.

The Lummi Nation, as a self-governing tribe, is the third-largest tribe in Washington State with over 5,300 community members covering 13,500 acres of uplands and 10,500 acres of tidelands with a perimeter of close to 27 miles. Native American communities are some of the hardest-hit communities in terms of fatalities across the US so getting public health safety communications right with daily changing guidance from local, state, and federal health authorities is no small challenge.

"My current position is the Communications Director for the Lummi Tribe and in the position, I work with the emergency management team, along with the emergency preparedness team to prepare for winter storms. I also work with the teams to prepare for disasters. In that work, I have seen and not seen enough work being done. I feel that there is so much more to be done and I have had the opportunity in my position to bring in more emergency preparedness and go out to seek different training opportunities on my own. I look at my community, we are a nation within a nation, and being able to provide for our people. Our community is very reliant on our government to make sure that we are protected," said Julie.

She also added, "The thought of preparedness and the thought of management needs to be at the forefront to

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“There has been growth over the last several years, but there is a lot more to go when it comes to making sure that in an event of an emergency, that we have those working relationships.”

show its importance and I think being able to bring that to the community and speak to them in a way that allows one to come in to bring that information. It is definitely a lot about relationships. The biggest piece is the relationships with the community but another big piece, especially in our area, is the local, state, and federal partners. Those relationships are still being built here in Lummi. There has been growth over the last several years, but there is a lot more to go when it comes to making sure that in an event of an emergency, that we have those working relationships. We want them to know whom they are talking to and that they know us to help better understand the needs of the community.”

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ABOUT OUR CENTER’S EFFORTS: Over 12 years ago, the Center working with Pierce College and its Advisory Board established the first fully online Homeland Security Emergency Management Associates and Certificate Program in WA State. When the community colleges statewide online technology allowed, the Center helped Pierce College develop a new approach for program delivery, which allowed colleges to sign Collaboration Agreements that allowed them to deliver the Pierce College HSEM AA Degree Program Community and Technical College in the state. The Seven (7) colleges: Peninsula College in Port Angeles, Olympic College in Bremerton, Highline College and Cascadia College in King County, Edmonds College in Snohomish County, Skagit Valley College which provided access for Skagit, Island, and Whatcom Counties and Big Bend Community College in Moses Lake which provides local access in Central WA.

In 2014, to meet the increasing demand by employers for qualified professions in this field, the Center, Pierce College, and their respective Advisory Boards begin discussions about establishing a Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) online degree program. In 2015, the State Board for Community Colleges approved the BAS Degree. Pierce College began offering the Program in the fall of 2016.

In 2019, the HSEM Degree program added its Tribal Certificate thanks to Lynda and many others’ work. Lynda stated that the Tribal Certificate helps prepare graduates with preparedness, management, and leadership competencies. Tribal Certificate graduates are current and

will be hired by Tribal governments and other HSEM public and private industry partners such as utilities/energy, construction management, supply chain/trade, maritime, and IT/Cyber Security.

Lynda believes that Tribal Communities in Washington State have an amazing opportunity to access a Tribal statewide certificate through their local community and technical college system. The Center of Excellence for HSEM and our Tribal can help people learn more about training and Certification here in Washington State.



INTERVIEW WITH ELYZABETH ESTRADA



For this month's Confluence, we wanted to highlight tribal emergency managers. Our Education & Outreach Coordinator, Brandi Hunter, recommended we highlight Elyzabeth Estrada. Brandi said, "I met Elyzabeth on LinkedIn. She had joined Aspiring Emergency Managers Online and introduced herself to me and said she would like to help the community any way she could. From there I asked her if she would like to do one of AEMO's video series called '3-Minute Informational Videos' which features professional emergency managers and provides a snapshot of their experience as an emergency manager in their field/expertise and how aspiring emergency managers can get their foot in the door of an all-hazards field. She also participated in AEMO's first webinar called 'Insider Series' which is a follow up to the video series for a live Q&A with participating aspiring emergency managers.

Elyzabeth is a Training & Exercise Emergency Management Coordinator at the University of Miami Health System & Miller School of Medicine in Miami, FL. She currently serves as the Planning Section Chief (PSC) for the Health System's Medical Coordination Center (MCC) and currently during the Public Health Emergency: COVID-19 response. In 2014, Elyzabeth began as an intern at the Miami-Dade County Office of Emergency Management. She was then hired as an Emergency Management Specialist where she supported the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in the Evacuation Support Unit aiding in the coordination efforts for the County's vulnerable population community and assisted the Recovery Manager during an activation of the Recovery Operations Center.

Brandi talked with Elyzabeth in an interview about her experience from 2016 to 2018 working with Seminole Tribe of Florida, a federally recognized Tribe as an Emergency

Management Coordinator where she routinely executed tabletop exercises for executive leadership in the Gaming Enterprise: Hard Rock International. During an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activation, she served as the Human Services Branch Director. In this role, Elyzabeth supported the six Seminole Tribe of Florida reservations during the Hurricane Irma response.

Brandi: What were the challenges that the tribe had when it came to emergency preparedness?

Elyzabeth: What I came to learn is that each indigenous group widely differs, but the one outlook they predominately share are the spiritual connections to their homelands. For some tribes, if you prepare for something, then they believe that it will happen. Prepare for a hurricane, the hurricane will come. Prepare for an earthquake, then the earthquake will come. It was a huge learning curve the first year trying to find a way speak at community meetings about the importance of preparedness without actually using the word preparedness. I got very creative in learning how to talk about preparedness.



Brandi: What kind of training and education is need for tribal nations to have a functioning emergency management/disaster preparedness system in place?

Elyzabeth: When I worked at Seminole Tribe, there were quite a few natural disasters that happened, one of them was Hurricane Irma. We really need to be mindful of how big tribes are in terms of being aware of their geographic locations. Also, when responding to all of these disasters, which were mostly hurricanes, tribal emergency management must have a Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). With having your HMP, it allows you to request assistance to FEMA. So, if you proclaim a declaration of an emergency without an HMP, you will not be considered to receive emergency assistant. In our first year, we had to write an HMP quickly because not only were we responding to the storm, but we were responding to a storm with no plan. What I would recommend is that everything single tribe needs to make sure they have an

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Elyzabeth: During Hurricane Irma, the Seminole Tribe owned a Seminole petroleum company. Now knowing that and working at different agencies, I know what their resources and capabilities are so I know how we can partner together. I tell our partners to get into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Seminoles in case we lose gas during an emergency such as a hurricane. Not only are we relying on partners with our community, we are also creating relationships. Creating that comradery of whole community approach is essential. The tribes have resources. Consider them when doing whole community planning. Knowing what they have beforehand is important during times of needs. Show the tribes how you can aid them too.

Elyzabeth: I think it really taught me to know my community better. It has taught me to realize that it is important to know who our constituents are and really take the time to hear what they have to say.

Thankfully, my experience is really bar none. Many people don't have tribal experience. People have reached out to be for guidance on how to collaborate with tribes. I have different perspectives. So, the biggest takeaway for me was just really being open to listening to what the tribes had to say and respecting their culture. That may sound very obvious to us, but to other people it is not like that at all. I wanted to retain that bond with the Seminole Tribe and continue to make that change for them even from a distance. That is always at the forefront.

Currently, Elyzabeth is pursuing an MPA & MPH dual degree at the University of Miami. She is also a member of the American Meteorological Society (AMS) Committee for Hispanic and Latinx Advancement (CHALA) and serves as a Public Sector Ambassador, aiding in the English to Spanish translation of official weather related content.



CRISIS, RISK, EMERGENCY, AND DISASTER (CRED) COMMUNICATIONS (FUNDAMENTALS)

Course Description –

Crisis, Risk, Emergency, and Disaster (CRED) Communications are distinct yet intrinsically related fields. This course will introduce all of this and examine them as distinct areas that should be viewed and handled differently. It is the aim of this course to explore them as different fields and build appropriate skillsets. The course will provide, not just theoretical arguments, but practical solutions for practitioners charged with public communications in emergencies and disasters.

The Fundamentals Course is targeted at non-communications professionals who may be responsible for emergency communications on behalf of an agency or organization. Typically, these people may be responsible for warnings and updates for a situation their agency has no operational responsibility for, such as a fire at a school where the school needs to reach students and families but has no responsibility to provide commentary on the fire.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- INTRODUCTION
- CRISIS, RISK, EMERGENCY AND DISASTER COMMUNICATIONS FUNDAMENTALS
- PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS FUNDAMENTALS
- AUDIENCES AND REACTIONS
- MESSAGING
- SHORT MESSAGES

OUTCOMES:

- BUILD KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE FIELDS OF CRISIS, RISK, EMERGENCY AND DISASTER COMMUNICATION
- UNDERSTAND EMOTIONAL, CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT IN DISASTER THAT AFFECT DISASTER COMMUNICATION
- UNDERSTANDING OF THE NEED FOR STRATEGY AND HOW TO DEVELOP AND DELIVER A STRATEGIC PLAN IN A DISASTER SITUATION
- BUILD AN APPRECIATION OF THE NEED FOR A SOUND APPROACH TO MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY
- UNDERSTAND AND DEVELOP STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH HIGH-PRESSURE WORK ENVIRONMENTS

Start Date: 1/18/2021

End Date: 2/22/2021

Course Fee \$495.00

Register for Winter quarter 2021 at

<https://my.pierce.ctc.edu/.../CEOLReg/registerclasses.aspx>

Go to Find Classes

Quarter: Winter2021

Search By: Course

Title Keyword: CRED

Class Number: 23124

Contact Kellie Hale for more information at

khale@pierce.ctc.edu

Instructor Bio:

Based in Brisbane, Australia, Peter Rekers brings a wealth of experiences to the Institute for this course. He has been in a variety of public information roles including as the Media Director for Coalition Forces in Iraq in 2003. This involved managing all media relations both face to face and via phone to the world's media. He was also responsible for the management of daily media briefings for both military and Coalition Provisional Authority spokespeople and leadership. These briefings would be attended by up to 450 media and included media conferences for Colin Powell and Don Rumsfeld. In Australia, he has been in senior Public Information roles during wildfires, floods, cyclones, and severe weather events. He has often been the primary spokesperson for the agencies he represented in these events. As a consultant, he has worked in a variety of industries including aviation, corrections, education, construction, and infrastructure delivery.

Peter co-founded Emergency Media and Public Affairs (EMPA) in 2007 as a platform to share lessons identified in disaster public communications through conferences in Australia, New Zealand, and in 2019, Portland OR. He has presented training and conference presentations throughout Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, Canada, and the USA including to FEMA in DC.

PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES FOR TRIBES

Become more prepared for emergencies with our training opportunities, grant programs and preparedness tips.



[Training for Tribal Representatives](#)

Training courses by FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI). Specific courses are tailored to tribal audiences, including tribal emergency managers, tribal community response personnel, and tribal leaders.

[Training: Center for Domestic Preparedness](#)

The Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP) trains emergency responders in ten different disciplines, such as law enforcement, healthcare and hazardous materials. Training for local, state and tribal responders is fully funded by DHS to include travel, lodging and meals.

[Tribal Homeland Security Grant Program](#)

This grant program provides funding to Indian tribes to strengthen Tribes' capacity to prepare for and respond to emergency situations. Additional [FEMA grant programs](#) are also available to tribal governments.

[Ready Indian Country](#)

Ready Indian Country provides preparedness resources for tribal communities. Find resources and information designed for Indian Country and tailored to your geographic region.

[Getting Ready in Indian Country: Emergency Preparedness and Response for Native American Cultural Resources](#)

The Seminole Tribe of Florida's Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum lives with the threat of hurricanes, wildfires, and mold. After Hurricane Wilma damaged the museum's roof in 2005, the staff realized that a functional emergency plan was needed. The museum is now part of a tribal-wide plan that includes annual updates, Incident Command System training, and regular drills. Museum Director Anne McCudden says proudly, "because of this work, we know we can safely evacuate our collections to a secure vault in 24 hours."

[Tribal Curriculum](#)

The Tribal Curriculum courses are delivered by a team of instructors who are carefully selected for their extensive experience working for a tribal government in emergency management and the majority of the instructors are Native. Feedback from participants unanimously supports the cultural appropriateness and credibility of the Tribal Curriculum instructor team.

[Tribal Homeland Security Emergency Management Certificate](#)

Created by Pierce College faculty, this map outlines the initial coursework for this career field. It provides you a clear path to complete your certificate by listing a specific set of courses relevant to your program and career. The map is designed with the appropriate number of credits and meets certificate requirements. Courses are organized in a recommended sequence; please schedule accordingly.

[Washington State Tribal Colleges Directory](#)



Photo of Dignity of Earth & Sky, located in Chamberlain, South Dakota